

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A floating structure comprising:
a floatable hull that presents an upper deck;
a column assembly that is retractable and extendable below the hull; and
a storage vessel for storage of a material of the group consisting of hydrocarbon gas and solid hydrocarbon hydrates.
2. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is disposed within the floatable hull.
3. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is located atop the floatable hull.
4. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is surrounded by an environmental boundary.
5. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 4 wherein the environmental boundary comprises an insulated shell.
6. (Currently amended) The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is disposed within a the center column assembly of the floating structure.

7. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 4 wherein temperature is controlled within the environmental boundary.
8. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 7 wherein temperature is controlled via circulation of a fluid of desired temperature within the boundary.
9. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 8 wherein fluid pressure of the fluid is also controlled.
10. (Currently amended) A floating structure comprising:
a floatable hull that presents an upper deck and defines a hollow central section therewithin;
a center column assembly mounted within the hollow central section and being retractable and extendable below the hull; and
a plurality of storage vessels disposed within the floatable hull, each of the storage vessels being useful for storage of hydrocarbon gas or hydrates.
11. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one of the storage vessels is located upon the upper deck.
12. (Previously presented) The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one of the storage vessels is located within the floating hull.
13. (Currently amended) The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one

of the storage vessels is located within the ~~center~~ column assembly.

14. (Currently amended) A method of storing compressed hydrocarbon gases or solid hydrates following production and prior to transport to a remote location, comprising the steps of:

disposing said gases or hydrates within a storage vessel upon a floating platform,
the floating platform having a hull and a column assembly that is extendable and retractable below the hull for stability of the floating platform;
controlling the temperature of the storage vessel.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of offloading the gases or hydrates to a transport tanker.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of mooring the floating platform in place proximate an offshore production well prior to disposing the gases or hydrates within the storage vessel.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14 wherein the step of controlling the temperature of the storage vessel comprises circulating a fluid of desired temperature about the storage vessel.